

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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AFDROUGHT

PARIS FOR HELMAN, ROME FOR FODAG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: USE OF COTONOU-PARAKOU-NIAMEY-GAO RAIL/ROAD TO MOVE
GRAIN TO SIXTH REGION OF MALI

REF: (1) STATE 228415 (NOTAL)

1. DURING DISCUSSIONS WITH MINISTER DOUKARA, WE ASKED POSSIBILITY USING SUBJECT ROUTE AS ALTERNATIVE METHOD SUPPLYING GRAIN TO SIXTH REGION.
2. MINISTER DOUKARA SAID THE ROAD WAS IN "VERY BAD" CONDITION, THAT IS MADE MORE SENSE TO MOVE GRAIN FROM MOPTI TO GAO OVERLAND AFTER THE RIVER SUBSIDED AND THAT SEPARATE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF MALI, NIGER AND DAHOMEY WOULD HAVE TO BE NEGOTIATED IN ORDER TO PERMIT GRAIN SHIPMENT (INCLUDING AGREEMENT FOR TRUCK TRANSIT, ETC.).
3. ALTHOUGH MINISTER DOUKARA, MALI'S DROUGHT RELIEF COORDINATOR, IS MORE INTERESTED IN MOPTI-GAO ROAD, WE ARE NOT YET PREPARED TO FORECLOSE POSSIBILITY USING ALTERNATIVE ROUTE OR VARIANT THEREOF, AS ADDITIONAL WAY TO SUPPLY SIXTH REGION
4. ACTION POSTS ARE REQUESTED TO ADVISE AID/W AS TO

THE CONDITION OF THEIR PORTION OF THE ROUTE ABOVE, AND THE FEASIBILITY OF MOVING HEAVILY LOADED (MAX. 25 MT.) GRAIN TRUCKS FROM PARAKOU TO GAO. IF THE ROUTE IS DEEMED NOT FEASIBLE, WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN KNOWING SPECIFIC REASONS (POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, PHYSICAL, ETC.). IF FEASIBLE, WE ARE INTERESTED IN ANY ESTIMATIONS YOU CAN GIVE US OF TRANSIT TIME, THE AVAILABILITY OF, COST OF AND WILLINGNESS OF TRUCKERS TO MOVE GOODS, REPAIR PROBLEMS ONE MIGHT ENCOUNTER, FUEL AVAILABILITY, AND THE AMOUNT OF GOVERNMENT-GOVERNMENT COOPERATION NECESSARY TO INSURE ACCESS TO GAO. THIS WOULD INVOLVE, INTER ALIA, AN ASSESSMENT AS TO WHETHER THE RAILROAD COULD HANDLE INCREASED GRAIN TONNAGE SPECIFICALLY DESIGNATED FOR MALI (C. 2500 MT PER MONTH) AND THE STEPS NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS.

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FURTHER, WE UNDERSTAND THE LIPTAKO-GOURMA AUTHORITY MAY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ROAD REPAIRS IN SOME PART OF THE AREA. IF SO, CAN OUAGADOUGOU ADVISE WHAT PLANS THEY HAVE FOR REPAIRS TO BE MADE OVER THE ROUTE IN THE PRE-SUMMER 1974 PERIOD?

5. WHILE THE GOM IS NOT YET WILLING TO DISCUSS USE OF THE ROUTE, WE WOULD BE REMISS IF WE DID NOT INVESTIGATE

THE ROUTING AS ADDITIVE OR AS A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO
THE MOPTI-GAO ROAD. DECONTROL 12/31/73. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

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